

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

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"*A Faive Danzell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIII. A SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

ON the whole England is a church-going nation, especially in its rural districts. The beautiful little church which, built by the generosity of a former Eagle Bannison, nestled among its firs, would certainly have been thought to have been built in vain had the Squire and his lady not occupied one seat—there were no pews, for Mr. Heaton's church was known for miles round as the High Church—and had not Kestell of Greystone and his daughters been in the seat close behind them; for, to their honour be it said, unless absent from home, these two representative men always did occupy their seats.

The Squire had no particular doctrines to uphold; but he liked things, as he said, done "decently and in order." He was usually tired on Sunday, from no mean bodily exertion during the week, so he understood Sunday to mean a day of rest; and no one was ever surprised to see the Squire gently nodding through the sermon. The Squire himself was too humble to fancy his actions of any importance, even to the preacher. He knew his wife would keep up the honour of the family.

Mrs. Eagle Bannison always put on a special mood for Sunday; but it depended which Sunday it was.

But Mrs. Eagle Bannison always knew exactly who was at church, and what cottager's wife on the estate had not followed her example of having "no care for the Sunday dinner." If she remembered the

culprit during the week, that unfortunate woman would receive a visit; but the Squire's wife, having rather a short memory, sometimes went to the wrong Mrs. Smith, and delivered the lecture kindly, but firmly, before she discovered her mistake by the remark of the woman:

"Well, ma'am, I'm sorry to seem rude; but I did get to church, though Tom didn't much like my going about on Sunday morning."

"Then it must have been your neighbour, Mrs. Smith. If you were there, you can tell me the text. I always look it out; it's such a help during the week."

"I dare say it is, ma'am; but if you'll excuse me speaking plain, texts don't help you much at the wash-tub. Texts seem to me like the flour before you've rolled in the butter, when you're making pastry, it's best to wait to the end to see if it'll come out agreeable-like; but Mr. Heaton he most in general works 'em in well. Tom and me often says so."

After this Mrs. Eagle Bannison beat a retreat to the other Mrs. Smith.

Miss Heaton devoted herself to the school children, sitting where she could be in easy reach of them, and every five minutes making a dive at the sinner, and returning to her seat with some confiscated property.

Elva had once declared she was sure the children were naughty out of kindness of heart for fear of leaving Miss Heaton unemployed.

All this may sound very unfit occupations to be carried on in a church, especially in one standing, as this did, surrounded by all the works of Nature, which, in their manner, ceaselessly gave thanks; but there was many a man and woman who did listen, and, as far as pos-

sible, fulfil the highest part of their being by prayer and praise. Mr. Heaton, himself, was certainly one of these. When he came home it was in vain that Clara questioned him about those who had attended, his ambiguous answer of "Oh, I daresay he or she was there," was apt to make his sister say :

"It really is your duty to know who comes to your church, Herbert."

Mr. Kestell neither went to sleep nor found his texts ; but he was, as Clara expressed it, "quite a pillar of your church, Herbert."

"Not my church, dear, I hope."

"Well, you know what I mean, Herbert. Mr. Kestell is a great support to our schools. With all her talk, Mrs. Eagle Bennison is very mean; and, if it were not for Mr. Kestell, we should be very badly off."

"Mr. Kestell is very kind and generous ; but he is much richer than the Squire, and has no landed property."

"You always find excuses for people, Herbert. It's a ridiculous habit."

When Clara was angry with him, Herbert only smiled. It was safer to accept blame which only was meant for himself.

On this special Sunday the small church was quite full. Indeed, Mrs. Eagle Bennison secretly wished both the Mrs. Smiths had stayed at home, as every seat was occupied. Jesse Vicary, who came in a little late, was put into the Squire's seat, much against his own will, however.

Hoel Fenner had managed to sit where he could see the Kestells. In London he was not a very constant worshipper ; but here, of course, church-going was expected of one, and Hoel, as we know, prided himself on doing what was expected of him ; being one of those men who find it real pain to disappoint people if they have formed a good opinion of any one.

But as his eyes travelled towards Elva, they lighted on Jesse Vicary.

"I must speak to him after church," he thought. "How well and handsome he looks ; these few days of country life have made another man of him. Curiously enough, he looks here quite like a gentleman. He might be a young country squire, with his strong build and resolute face."

Something else Hoel saw, but did not remark in words to himself ; and this was that Jesse Vicary was certainly attending to the words he was hearing, and not merely watching his neighbours.

"It's born in that class," he thought,

after a few moments. "They ought to be grateful to Nature for giving them so much young-world faith."

And so the service went on ; and if the angel of record passed down and noted the prayers that were uttered that morning, not many from Hoel Fenner were there of a certainty.

When the people streamed out there were friendly gatherings in the fir-avenue that led from the church to the moor. Hoel was only in time to help Elva and her sister into the carriage, and to greet their father.

"I hear you want to see me," said Mr. Kestell, gently. "Come and dine with us, Mr. Fenner, this evening, then we can have plenty of leisurely talk."

"Thank you ; if Miss Heaton will spare me."

"Then do come. All right, Turner."

The horses went off. Everybody made way for Mr. Kestell's beautiful horses. Mrs. Eagle Bennison, leaning on her husband's arm, smiled sadly at the two sisters ; her smile meant :

"I never take out my horses on Sunday. I cannot understand how you can do it."

The look always troubled Amice, who made objections to driving home from church ; but it was a standing custom, which Mr. Kestell would not alter. He was always hoping his wife would be well enough to join him. It was for her sake, so there was no hope of altering, and Amice had to resign herself, but it was a weekly trial to her. Saint Catherine of Sienna would never have driven to church in a carriage with a pair of horses.

Hoel, seeing he had half an hour before he should have to appear, joined Jesse and his sister. He thought the sister looked nothing particular ; but he had just adopted his model for perfection, and certainly Symee in no way resembled Elva Kestell.

"So you got my letter, Vicary, and you agree to my clearing the way," he said, when Symee said she must hurry home, for the blissful time at the farm was over for her.

"I shall be very much obliged if you would do so, sir. Of course, I do not allow that Mr. Kestell has a right to settle my affairs—I mean no real right, but from courtesy and gratitude I should wish him to approve. I am not sure, however, that he will understand the change, unless you explain that I shall in truth better my position ; and as I shall be doing very congenial work, I shall certainly be happier."

"He will easily be made to understand that. Of course, you will have to give due notice."

"A month on either side, sir. But I should not like to leave my employers in any difficulty."

"As to that, a clerk's place is soon caught up. Alas, there are too many waiting; and the world ought to thank you for making room."

"I will come to-morrow and speak to Mr. Kestell myself, of course," said Jesse, decidedly. "He would like me to do that I am sure; but he has always been so kind that he will make no long opposition—none, indeed, when he sees it will be for my good."

"Of course not."

"And, Heaven helping me, I will do my best in my new position," added Jesse, with a quiet, determined look on his face. "When I have spoken to Mr. Kestell, I will tell my sister that if she will begin in a small way, she may come to me at once. She can help me with copying; and I have an idea that I could have a type-writer, and teach her to use it; she is very clever with her fingers, and is not badly educated for her position."

There was such a ring of hopefulness and joy in Vicary's voice, that Hoel was more than satisfied he had found the right man. He prided himself once more on his discernment.

"Besides, I owe the fellow some thanks for bringing me down here again. It would have been difficult to appear without some excuse," thought Hoel, as he retraced his steps, making up his mind to ramble out alone after lunch to avoid Miss Heaton's searching questions.

He framed Mrs. Hoel Fenner in a gold frame, in which she looked lovely. She was to be much admired by the best and choicest literary society in London that would circle round them. And deep down in his heart there was another motive, powerful, though not specially praiseworthy. If he married Elva Kestell, there would be no need of ever applying to his uncle for a loan; and there would be no dread of that "if" which had rankled so deeply in his breast. The old man's selfishness would be wasted, and Hoel would be sufficiently revenged. The London Hospital might inherit with pleasure, and much good might it derive from it. Still, let it be clearly understood that Hoel was not thinking of marrying for money; he was quite above such a thought; indeed, he

would have preferred to marry a woman who was not an heiress, but as his choice had fallen on one who was rich, all the benefits that would accrue crowded to his brain.

The idea of failure did not much trouble him. True, he remembered her blush when Walter Akister passed by; but he could not imagine a woman really giving herself to such a very unpromising specimen of the human species; at least, not such a woman as Elva.

If some misfortunes cast their shadows before them, is it expecting too much of some events of a more joyful character to cast reflected lights? This Sunday Elva had risen with a strange feeling of light-heartedness about her, which surprised herself. If she thought about Hoel, yet it was not with him that she associated her happiness, though she looked forward to seeing him again and hearing him talk. When she did not remember her "Undine" she enjoyed Hoel's conversation, as, indeed, most people did.

Amice, whose moods were never on the surface and were altogether of another and stranger type, was surprised to hear Elva offer to accompany her to the school after lunch. She was accustomed to going her own way alone on these errands of mercy.

The two sisters walked a little way in silence down the hill beyond Rushbrook, where a scattered hamlet necessitated a Sunday class in two rooms of a cottage. Miss Heaton much disliked this class, for here Herbert and Amice met every Sunday; but the young ladies before-mentioned not living very near had not volunteered to take the girls, so Amice was allowed to do it by Clara Heaton; but always under protest. Had she guessed that Amice looked upon Herbert as simply a clergyman who would of course never marry, she might have been saved many an anxious hour.

"Amice, dear, did not you think papa looked rather worried this morning? I hope that nothing is the matter," said Elva as they walked along.

"Did he? Perhaps he fancied mamma might not like a visitor this evening."

"Oh, it could not be about Mr. Fenner, he seemed quite eager he should come. Do you like him, Amice?"

"Like him—whom do you mean?"

Elva again felt a little uncomfortable about Amice; now and then these dreamy moods seemed to come over her and she seemed to hear nothing.

"Why, Mr. Hoel Fenner. He even managed to interest mamma yesterday. I wonder what he wants to say about Jesse Vicary."

Amice lifted her dreamy eyes from the ground.

"He has not come only about Jesse Vicary."

"About what else, then?" but, as she spoke, Elva blushed, for Amice fixed her eyes upon her sister's face, and the gaze seemed to explain the mystery. Elva was indignant.

"He is not good enough for you," continued Amice, quietly; "but I saw it plainly yesterday."

Elva stood quite still now, and stamped her foot.

"Amice, you are too ridiculous; and you ought not to carry your—your fancies so far; it is not right. I am sure Mr. Hoel Fenner has come only to see papa."

"Elva, don't look like that, I am so sorry to hurt you, darling. I did not mean it;" she covered her face with her hands. "Yes, I see it again, it is the curse on our family. That idea takes possession of me more and more. There is a curse upon us and all our doings."

They were walking by the side of a fireplace, and some great trunks lay on one side of the road, looking very inviting. Elva sat down and gently drew Amice to her side.

"What do you mean about the curse? Why, that is perfectly ridiculous! Was there ever a family more blessed than we are?"

"You forget what I told you about myself, Elva. Is not that a curse? Do you not consider how hard, how very hard it is to——"

She broke off, for Elva's face was not at all sympathetic; but, on the contrary, it expressed impatience.

"You brood and fancy till I do believe you lose all common sense, Amice; do be sensible, and don't say things which— which make me angry."

"About Mr. Fenner? Well, then, I will say no more, only you forget, dear, that we have often talked about the future. You will marry some day. You have often told me what your husband was to be like. Oh, Love must be a beautiful thing, when it can be pure, and great, and noble; when two people can offer all they have to a service which is above them, and just go on together fighting against evil."

"That is an impossible ideal," said Elva, softly.

"Does it seem so to you? And yet I can see it—only sometimes, though. It seems to me that if two could be found to go hand in hand into those dark alleys and those wicked courts in London, or elsewhere, and if they could go and say that they knew what happiness there was in the true light, even the most miserable and the most degraded would believe two witnesses. Do you think, Elva, it is all an empty vision, and only part of the— curse?"

"Nonsense!" said Elva. "And there is the bell ringing, so you must not stay longer. I shall take a walk on the moors. And please, dear Amice, shake off all your ideas; indeed, it is much better to be like other people." And with this advice, Elva turned back, and plunged into heather. She felt troubled at what Amice had said, even though she dismissed it from her mind with an impatient gesture.

"I want life and love," she thought. "I wonder if many girls want it as I do. I wish I could do great things; and yet nothing seems to happen to me except——" The wind swept suddenly past; and with a little shudder Elva shook off the disagreeable idea. "I won't think of Mr. Akister. I never, never could love him. I can't think how he dared to—fancy I ever could. I believe in happiness, even though Amice will not. She fancies God calls people to accept misery. No, no, that cannot be."

Still fighting her way through the thick heather, and fighting inwardly the idea that in any way human beings are called to be miserable, Elva reached the foot of the Beacon, and, scrambling up a long bank, she sat down under the shadow of a Scotch fir-tree. In a few moments the beauty of the scenery, the sweet scent of the heather, the hum of a bumble-bee, seeking out the largest flower, all the sights and sounds gradually numbed her senses. She was inhaling a narcotic. Nature seemed to be taking the eager child in her arms, and lulling her into a softer and more peaceful mood. The birds and the insect life seemed to sing the same song of happiness, and to repeat that life is made for joy, and that the creed of suffering is false; that Amice, with her wild idea of curses and of expiation, was mistaken, and that——

How was it? Surely she was acting the same scene again. She had been here

before; she had gone over the struggle, and, yes—

"Miss Kestell, this is an unexpected pleasure."

Elva's sudden fear was calmed; it was not Walter Akister's voice she heard, or his strange, fierce looks she looked up to behold, but—Hoel Fenner.

"Can you wonder that one gets to love this place?" answered Elva, not surprised that Hoel sat down beside her as if this was his right place.

"No, indeed, I do not; I have been watching you for a few moments," he said, slowly, "and I saw that you alone, in all this spot perhaps, really appreciate what you see."

Hoel was struggling with his own eagerness to speak to Elva, somehow or other to make her understand that she attracted him above all other women; but she was so perfectly natural, that it was a harder task than he expected. There was not the least consciousness of his admiration in her face; the deep grey eyes looked out upon the beauty of nature, not on his own perfections. Hoel did not know that this morning Elva would have looked straight into his face. It was Amice's words that kept her eyes averted, even though she did not believe them.

"I came out here to wait for Mr. Heaton. He said he might join me if he were not detained, and I believe he is teaching some brats now. I wonder how much good all that sort of thing does? I don't mean any disrespect to Herbert Heaton or his cloth; but, in the long run, isn't a clergyman's life rather a wasted labour? Good people are sometimes so very disagreeable."

Elva might have agreed with him a little while ago; now she was seized with the spirit of contradiction.

"How can doing things for people we love be waste of time?"

"Love is a wide term when used by the clergy, for instance. Most of them will work from duty, and duty is a desire to get a good deal of percentage for your money. Disinterestedness is difficult to find."

"Oh no, no," said Elva, "that cannot be so. I know my sister is perfectly disinterested. I don't think the idea of reward ever enters her head."

Elva forgot all about Amice's stray words now in defending her, and looked straight and fearlessly at Hoel.

"You are a true friend, Miss Kestell," he said, in an altered tone. "The first

time I saw you I was struck by your being entirely different from every other woman I have met. You must give me leave to ask you—to tell you something here out on this heather bank; may I?"

There was no answer. Elva blushed deeply. After all, was Amice right? But how different this was from Walter's speech. The deep courtesy of the tone was very flattering, coming as it did from such a man.

"Will you give me leave?" he repeated, and there was something quite new in his tone—a boyish sort of pleading which she had never heard or noticed before.

"I don't understand what you mean," said Elva, quite afraid that she was weaving a wrong meaning into his words because of Amice's silly speech.

"Yes, I see you don't. I have no right to expect that you should understand me; but I do ask you to believe me. Will you?"

"Yes, of course," said Elva, recovering her breath. "Why should I doubt you?"

"Because you have known me so short a time, and because you may not believe that there is very deep, earnest truth in what I am saying. You remember that dinner party? I am afraid I unwittingly offended you that evening, and yet I assure you I meant to do the contrary. I thought then that you were the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and then I knew that my fate had brought me here, and that you were the only woman I ever wished to—to— Miss Kestell, tell me if I may go on. My life will be dead for ever if you tell me that I am annoying you. Shall I go on?"

Elva was slowly picking a piece of quaking-grass to pieces, bit by bit.

"Yes," she said; feeling as if she were another Elva, or not herself.

"I met you here on this moor the next day, you remember. Some second sights disenchant us. I was not disenchanted. I admired you a thousand times more. You seemed to me like a breath of this life-giving air, and yet a woman whom any man, all the rest of his life, might be proud to have loved. But when we parted I saw you throw away my gift of flowers. I knew then that I must, indeed, have been personally disagreeable to you. You do not deny it. Why should you? I saw that you had no wish to see more of me, and yet—don't despise me because I am making my confession, Miss Kestell—and yet I was even more attracted. I went

home and tried to think it was all a happy autumn dream—a delusion that would fade. On the contrary; the more I tried to forget you the more your presence took possession of me. In short, I am here again, and this time there shall be no deception. I would much rather know that nothing can overcome your prejudice, your dislike, than make myself still more obnoxious to you. But last evening, you did not repel me. I cannot tell how thankful I am to meet you, because, if I hear my sentence from your lips, no one need know, no one need ever hear that—

"It is all so strange," said Elva, "what can I say?"

"Do not decide," said Hoel, very tenderly; he was touched by her distress. "I only want to let you judge whether some day you will care to keep a bunch of gentians, if I am here to give them to you?"

This was a very delicate way of making an offer, and Elva felt grateful. There was none of that fierce passion about him that there had been about Walter Akiater; the very difference attracted her, for the other had repelled her. The relief of finding Mr. Fenner was not going to make her say yes or no on the spot was so great, that Elva smiled.

"I expect, Mr. Fenner, that you have made a mistake," she said, suddenly; and the eyes that looked at him were so bright, that Hoel was more and more certain he had made none. "If you will walk round by the copse, I will make a confession, and then, after that, I am sure you will change your mind."

"A confession?"

"Yes, one that will alter the opinion you have of me. Indeed, you do not know me any more than—"

"Than you can know me. But I want your leave to teach you that I, at all events, do not make up my mind unless I am quite sure—"

Elva laughed now. She was young, and had the world before her. She was loved, and that was very sweet, even though she was not sure of loving, and had a confession to make.

"You once said very, very unkind things of me."

"I? Never."

"Yes, you did, and the truth is, I have never forgiven you. You see that I have so much to unlearn."

"What do you mean?"

Hoel was not given to much humour,

and he resented Elva's smile; for humour ought never to touch us personally if it is to be acceptable.

"I do not want to tell you, and yet I feel I ought to. How can any one love without perfect confidence? There, I will tell you, I wrote 'An Undine of To-day.'"

Elva paused on the sandy path and faced her detractor.

"You were Isidore Kent?"

Poor Hoel remembered clearly all the things he had said.

"Yes; now you see how differently you will think of me."

"But I care only about Elva Kestall," he said, just a little angry that the two were the same. Hoel had no wish to marry an authoress; he had a very decided objection to women writers unless they were of the first water; and then only at a distance from him.

"And you quite despise Isidore Kent. I knew you would."

"You will never write another novel," he said, in a low voice, not daring to take her hand, because of that perfect absence of all consciousness in her at this moment.

"Why?"

"Because, if you would give me leave, I shall make you the happiest woman in the world; and the happiest women do not write."

They had reached the place where their roads parted. Elva paused.

"Good-bye," she said, holding out her hand. "I would rather go home alone."

"May I ask your father this evening whether I may come to Rushbrook till—I know my fate?"

"Till I know my mind," she said with a brilliant smile. Then earnestly, in quite another mood, she added, passionately: "I want life to be beautiful. I want to have room in the world; will love give it to me? Amice believes in nothing but self-denial; but I am not good like Amice."

"Thank Heaven!" said Hoel to himself; aloud, he said:

"Give me leave to try, and I will make you understand that love can give you everything."

"And if I disappoint you?"

"Then you will be my most-loved memory," he said, earnestly.

"MERRY CARLISLE."

FEW of our English towns can compete in interest with "Merry Carlisle." As the

capital of that debateable Borderland, where English and Scotch rovers and freebooters led for stirring centuries a life of lawlessness and disorder, it was seldom free from the alarms of war, and its citizens may be said to have slept with hand on sword. The mere mention of its name fills one's ears with the whistle of cloth-yard shafts or the roar of cannon, and one's eyes with the pride and circumstance of military array. No other town in England, probably, has had to guard so vigilantly against hostile aggression. Perhaps no other town, if we except London, enjoys such an unbroken continuity of historical tradition. Its very name is British. Moreover, it is the only town, as Mr. Creighton points out, which has been added to England since the Norman Conquest. The picturesqueness of its position, though in this respect it is inferior to Durham, is an item in its account which must not be overlooked. A rising ground is shaped into a peninsula by two streams—the Calder and the Petteril, which, within less than a mile of each other, flow into the broad Eden as it rolls on its way to the Solway Firth. To the north this rising ground forms a bluff of sandstone which overlooks the Eden. Obviously the situation is not without attractive features.

Long before history begins, a tribe of the Brigantes occupied this ascent, which, with its woods and rivers, offered them shelter and security. They called their fortified homestead—an earthwork was thrown across the lower part of the peninsula—Caer Lywelydd, the town or camp of Lywelydd; a name which, through successive mutations, as Lugubalia, Caerhuel, Cardel, has come down to us in the form of Carlisle. Their pastoral peace was broken up by Agricola, the great soldier-statesman, who led the Roman legions on their march of conquest to the Firth of Tay. Driving the Britons from their hill, he planted a garrison on the opposite bank of the river, on the site of the present village of Stanwick. The great wall of Hadrian, which ramparted Norman England against invasion from the north, crossed the Eden just below Lugubalia, and considerably added to its strategic importance. From the neighbouring stations a network of roads was made to converge upon it, while the western branch of the great "via" from Eboracum (York) to Cataractonium (Catterick) passed through it to the Clyde. So it grew into a prosperous and populous town, and fared mightily well until the

fourth century, when the Roman Colossus began to totter towards its collapse. In 409 the Roman eagles were withdrawn from the great wall, and Lugubalia was left to provide for its own defence. The British people then took up arms with no little resolution, maintaining a gallant struggle against the Picts and Scots, who harassed them from the north, and the English, who were advancing from the south. It was during this period of stress and strain that they adapted the old Celtic legend of Arthur to their own patriotic needs, symbolising in him the Deliverer for whom they hoped and waited. It was then that Arthur's Seat and Arthur's Chair and Arthur's Table became localised in the neighbourhood of Carduel, under which name Carlisle figures conspicuously in the Arthurian romances.

Early in the seventh century the Berenician or Northumbrian English invaded this British territory, which, for some time, had been included in the Scotch kingdom of Strathclyde, and won a great battle at Degasstan or Dawstane Burn. Thereafter Caerduel passed under the influence of the conquerors, and a monastery was founded within its bounds about 684, and given in charge to Cuthbert, the saintly Bishop of Lindisfarne. But the overthrow of the Northumbrian power a few years afterwards, restored Caerduel to Strathclyde, and a century of disorder ensued which has left no intelligible record. In 875 it was plundered and burnt by the Danes, who destroyed town, fortress, and monastery; nor did it again lift up its head until the firm hand of the Norman Kings gave to England a settled government and a complete local organisation. William Rufus, claiming it as English ground, fortified it in 1092 after the Norman fashion, building a stout wall round its area, and raising a strong tower, which was enlarged and strengthened in the succeeding reign, on the summits of its sandstone cliff. He also planted it with colonies from Hampshire and other parts, with Flemish masons, and Norman soldiers. At the same epoch a monastery was founded by a Norman named Walter, which Henry the First completed, and bestowed upon the Austin or Augustinian Canons, the convent-church being dedicated, about 1118, to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In this way Carlisle came to have "everything handsome about it," and was fully equipped in its civil, military, and ecclesiastical relations. It was made the seat of a Bishopric, with a jurisdiction

extending over Cumberland and Westmoreland; and Adelulf, Prior of Nostell, was consecrated as its first pastor in August, 1133.

Being the great Frontier Fortress, on the border-line between England and Scotland, it had necessarily a stormy career, a kind of April existence, alternating between periods of good and evil fortune. Its English character was frequently disputed by the Scottish Kings, and, indeed, was not finally established until the reign of Henry the Third, when, through the good offices of a Papal legate, Alexander the Second abandoned all pretensions to it in return for certain demesnes (1242). Soon afterwards, a joint commission of English and Scottish Knights was appointed, who drew up a code of Border laws for the purpose of introducing some measure of order and discipline among the unruly population of the debateable lands.

Very little profit resulted from their labours, Edward the First stirring up the warlike feelings of the Borderers by his plans for the conquest of Scotland. On Carlisle fell the first "shock of arms:" the men of Annandale—forty thousand in number, it is said, but the figures are, doubtlessly, an exaggeration—surrounding the city, in March, 1296, and devastating the suburbs with fire and sword. The citizens seized their weapons, and made ready to hold their own; but a Scottish spy, contriving to escape, set fire to the prison, mounted the walls, and encouraged his countrymen to advance. A strong wind spread the flames far and wide, until a great part of the city was destroyed. In the confusion which took place, the walls were left almost unguarded; but while the burgesses were endeavouring to extinguish the fire, the women took their places, hurling stones from the battlements and keeping the assailants at bay with caldrons of boiling water. The Scotch made an attempt to burn down the city gates; but some of the citizens mounting the platform above the gate, fished up the leader of the attack with an iron hook, and held him aloft while others smote him dead with their lances. Dispirited by the loss of their commander the assailants sullenly withdrew.

After William Wallace's great victory at Stirling, he crossed the Border, committing the usual ravages, and, in due time, appeared before Carlisle. A priest was sent to demand its submission.

"My lord, William the Conqueror," he said, "sends to you that, taking thought for your lives, you may surrender to him your town and Castle without bloodshed. If you do this, he will spare your lives, limbs, and goods; if you refuse, he will put you all to the sword."

"Who is this Conqueror?" said the citizens.

"William, whom ye call Wallace."

"Our King," rejoined the men of Carlisle, "gave us to hold this town and Castle in his behalf, and we do not think it is his will that we should surrender it to your Lord William. Go and tell him that if he wishes to have it he must come and take it if he can, like a real Conqueror."

This bold answer, and the bold bearing that emphasized it, induced the Scots to pass by Carlisle and continue their southward march.

In 1298 Edward the First held a Parliament at Carlisle, which was now recognised "as the Royal head-quarters in the Scottish Expeditions," and was constituted, indeed, "a seat of the English Government."

When the great Plantagenet Sovereign—equally capable as warrior and statesman—prepared his last expedition against Scotland, in order to punish Robert Bruce (1307), it was at Carlisle that he mustered his array.

For a century and a half the history of Carlisle is simply a history of strife and contention. The outpost of England against her Scottish enemies, it always bore the brunt of their attack. How many sieges it withstood it is hardly worth while to enquire, as its position was in no wise altered by them; but this long discipline of warfare seems to have developed in its citizens a spirit of manly independence and an exceptional force of character.

Their Bishops were like unto themselves: witness gallant Bishop Kirby, who defended his diocese with indomitable resolution, and, on one occasion, led his men in person in pursuit of a large force of marauding Scots, upon whom he inflicted a very thorough chastisement. He was unhorsed in the affray, but recovered his seat with the nimbleness of a young Squire, and headed the decisive charge (1345).

Our Kings recognised the services of its citizens by heaping privileges upon it, such as few other English towns can have enjoyed; and in spite of its frequent

"baptisms of fire," the brave old city enjoyed a fair measure of prosperity.

The Convent-Church had long ago blossomed out into a Cathedral, which, in the fourteenth century, was rebuilt in the then prevailing style of architecture (Decorated), at least so far as regarded the choir, to which an additional bay was added, so as to make its entire length one hundred and thirty-eight feet. The nave at this time belonged to the citizens. It was a stately piece of Norman work, which needed neither restoration nor enlargement. When new transepts and a central tower were erected by Bishop William Strickland (1400-1419), Carlisle had a cathedral-church of which neither its priests nor its citizens had any reason to feel ashamed.

Among the famous names connected with Carlisle's grey old Castle is that of Richard the Third, who, when Duke of Gloucester, frequently resided there as Captain of the Castle, and Lord Warden of the Marches. He seems to have enlarged and strengthened it, and a tower on the wall, outside the moat, which connected it with the city, is still called Richard's Tower, and bears his well-known cognisance of a boar. Another name to be remembered is that of the Earl of Surrey, the "belted Will Howard" of Scott's chivalrous poem, who, in conjunction with Lord Dacre of Naworth, humbled the pride of Scotland on the red field of Flodden. By both these barons the southern districts of Scotland were ravaged with remorseless barbarity, provoking similar depredations on the part of the Scots. Our northern ballad-literature teems with stirring narratives of "peril and adventure" belonging to this dark period of international hostility; but romantic as such incidents appear in the rough-and-ready verse of the old minstrels, they were the potent cause of terrible sufferings, while they strengthened the bitterness of feeling which had too long prevailed between the two peoples.

An interesting chapter in the annals of the frontier-city deals with James the Fifth's attempt to gain possession of it in November, 1542. For this purpose ten thousand Scots, under Lord Maxwell, suddenly crossed the Esk. Their line of march might have been traced by the lurid glare of blazing cottages and granaries. Though taken by surprise, the men of Carlisle promptly responded to the call to arms of their Captain, Sir Thomas Wharton,

and, assisted by the local companies, which Lord Dacre and other nobles hurried up, advanced against the invaders, who, having quarrelled among themselves, broke in a panic at the approach of the sturdy Englishmen, and fled for their lives. Some fell on the field; many were taken prisoners; and hundreds perished in the swamps of Solway Moss. At the news of this disaster, James shut himself up in Falkland Palace, where he sickened of a slow fever and a broken heart, and died on the fourteenth of December—a week after the birth of his daughter, Mary Queen of Scots.

The Borders had been reduced into comparative order and tranquillity by the energy of Elizabeth and her ministers, and Carlisle had resumed the peaceful activity of civic life, when that unfortunate sovereign, Mary Queen of Scots, whose conduct and character have been so constant a theme of angry debate, and even whose beauty has been disputed—entered the border-capital as a guest to quit it as a prisoner. It was after the crushing defeat of her troops at Langside, that Mary resolved to throw herself upon Elizabeth's hospitality; and on the seventeenth of May, 1568, she was received at Carlisle by Lord Scrope, the Warden of the Marches. "The story of her coming," says Froude, "flew from lip to lip. Town and village, farm and manor-house, all over the northern counties, were frantic with enthusiasm. Her most eager hopes could not have been more brightly realised than they seemed in those first days. She held a little Court in the Castle, where all who wished to see her were received and welcomed."

But this promising condition of affairs was soon changed, and she was made to feel that her person was under restraint. In the haste of her flight she had come with no other clothes than those she wore; and an application to Elizabeth for the necessary additions to her wardrobe, brought her the niggardly present of "dos camisas ruines, y dos piezas de terciopelo negro, y dos pares de zapatos"—two torn chemises, two pieces of black velvet, and two pairs of shoes. Mary received them with such evident dissatisfaction, that Knowles, Elizabeth's agent, felt compelled to say that he thought "Her Highness's maid had mistaken, and had sent things necessary for such a maidservant as she was herself." However, on this point the Queen's anxiety was speedily relieved by the arrival of her own dresses from

Lochleven; but the closeness of her confinement increased daily.

As large numbers of Scots came across the Border to see their Sovereign, Elizabeth's officers had by no means a happy time of it. Twice they took her out hunting; but she rode so fast, her servants were so well mounted, and the Scotch border was so near, that when she wanted to go out again, they were obliged to tell her "that she must hold them excused." Her chamber window—the visitor to Carlisle is still shown Queen Mary's Tower—looked northward, and might be used for communication with her friends. A disguised postern-gate beneath was opened up, and sentries placed there, who could easily keep watch over the inconvenient casement.

So the time went on; Mary amusing herself, in the intervals of correspondence with Elizabeth, and interviews with Elizabeth's messengers, in the ordinary pursuits of feminine vanity. Mary Seaton—one of "the four Maries"—came to keep her captive mistress company, and as she had a pretty taste in "busking"—that is, hair-dressing—the Queen almost every day astonished Sir Francis Knowles with some novelty in head-gear.

At length Elizabeth and her ministers resolved to remove their prisoner further inland, and chose Bolton Castle, in Yorkshire, as her place of residence. Mary strongly objected, and told Knowles she would not go there unless she was carried. In the belief that she would make some desperate effort to escape before the preparations for her removal were completed, her windows were barred with iron; her male servants were sent out of the Castle at sunset; and when she walked or rode she was attended by a hundred troops. On the thirteenth of July, in spite of "extreme stout threatenings," and other tragical demonstrations, the removal was effected, Mary having been made to understand that resistance was useless.

After the union of the two crowns in the person of James the First, Carlisle lost a good deal of its importance. Its garrison was withdrawn, and, from the position of the Frontier Fortress and Capital of the Borders, it sank into an ordinary market town or county capital.

In 1617 it had the honour of a visit from James the First. Seventeen years later, some tourists in northern England describe it as being "both for revenues, buildings, and the inhabitants, and their con-

dition, very poor." The Cathedral is "like a great, wild country church; and as it appeared outwardly so was it inwardly, neither beautiful nor adorned one whit."

In the reign of Charles the First, however, it recovered much of its old dignity, and was for a time the chief Royal stronghold in the North. It sustained a protracted siege by the Scots, under Leslie, from October, 1644, until the following midsummer; its gallant defenders being compelled to eat hempseed, dogs, rats, and horse-flesh; and surrendering only when the crushing defeat of Charles, at Naseby, deprived them of all hope of relief.

The Scots remained in possession until December, 1646. To repair and strengthen the defences they made use of the solid masonry of the Cathedral, destroying the chapter-house, cloisters, canon-house, and a considerable portion of the nave.

In 1648, the town had another experience of civil war, and a Scottish garrison, on behalf of the King, was thrown into it by the Duke of Hamilton. But Cromwell, after his victory at Preston, sent a company of horse and foot to demand its submission; and its citizens knew he was not a man to be trifled with. Then came a long interval of peace.

In 1745 it was its ill luck to be involved in the troubles of the last Jacobite rebellion; and Prince Charles Edward, with his motley forces, appeared before its walls on the thirteenth of November. Under his banner served, if we may credit Sir Walter Scott, Fergus MacIvor, and the heir of Waverley, to say nothing of that estimable gentleman the Baron of Bradwardine. Scott tersely says: "They besieged and took Carlisle," and, as the town discreditably submitted in a couple of days, the incident was worth no more detailed notice.

On November the sixteenth, James the Third was proclaimed at the Market Cross, and on the eighteenth Prince Charles rode into the city, preceded by a hundred pipers. Just one month later he was back there again, the hero of a ruined cause; and, leaving a small garrison in the Castle, under Colonel Francis Townley, went on his way to Culloden and ruin. The Duke of Cumberland was following him closely, and on the thirty-first of December his troops entered the city, and made prisoners of the Jacobite garrison, three hundred and ninety-six in number. Thirty-one of the rebels, in October, 1746, suffered the barbarous penalties then inflicted for high

treason, and were hung, drawn, and quartered on Gallows Hill. Their heads were set up on pikes over the gates, or "yetts," as commemorated in a beautiful old ballad:

White was the rose in his gay bonnet,
As he faulded up in his broached plaidie;
His hand, which clasped the truth o' luvie,
Oh it was aye in battle readie!

His long, lang hair in yellow hanks
Waved o'er his cheeks sae sweet and ruddie,
But now they wave o'er Carlisle yetts,
In dripping ringlets, clotting bloodie.

Here ends the military history of Carlisle. Its later record is one of peace and prosperity, an immense stimulus having been supplied in 1761 by the introduction of cotton spinning and weaving, to which calico, hat, and iron manufactures have since been added, and the opening of improved communications between Whitehaven, Carlisle, and Newcastle. Then came the development of the railway system, which restored it to its old position as the Border capital, and made it the great centre and point of junction of the Anglo-Scottish railways. Its terminus is one of the finest structures of the kind in Great Britain, and presents a singularly interesting picture of continuous animation and incessant activity, as the loaded trains pass in and out with much whistling and creaking, clashing and clanging, amidst the shouts of frenzied porters, the ringing of unmusical bells, the shrill cries of newspaper boys, and the various voices of arriving and departing passengers.

Since 1760, the population has increased ninefold, and now exceeds 37,000. Perhaps the most disappointing thing about "Merry Carlisle" to the stranger who visits it with his mind full of historic memories, is its air of newness. The greater part seems to have been built within the last forty years; and this impression is enhanced by the aspect of the trim villas, with their blooming gardens, which have sprung up in the environs. The ancient "yetts" and walls have almost entirely disappeared; and if the castle-keep happily retains its old solidity and strength, and the old drawbridge and castle-ditch are as they were in "days of yore," little, indeed, survives of the buildings occupied by Edward the First, and afterwards by Queen Mary. But the Cathedral, with its beautiful choir, rich in all the glorious tracery and embellishment of the Decorated English Style, still recalls many a reminiscence of the past. Readers

who delight in figures will be pleased to know that this choir, than which there are few finer in England, measures a hundred and thirty-seven feet long, seventy-one feet wide, and seventy-five feet high. It was restored, together with the remainder of the building, in 1853 to 1857. And as it represents the successive changes of our architecture from 1093 to 1419, Carlisle Cathedral, though not one of our great English minsters, has its attractions for the antiquarian student.

It is pleasant to remember that here, in 1797, Sir Walter Scott—not yet famous as "the Author of 'Waverley'"—married Miss Carpenter. And as also connected with it we may mention two men of note—Archdeacon Paley, author of "The Evidences of Christianity," to whom a monument has been erected, and Dean Tait, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The latter held the deanery from 1849 to 1856, and during his residence underwent the terrible domestic affliction recorded in a few touching words on the base of a marble cross in Stanwick churchyard: "Here lie the mortal bodies of Five little Sisters, the much-loved Children of A. C. Tait, Dean of Carlisle, and Catherine his wife, who were all cut off within five weeks." They died of scarlet fever.

Traces of the antiquity of Carlisle occur in the names of some of its streets, such as English Street, Scotch Street, Tower Street, and Castle Street; Caldersgate, Botchergate, and Rickerate. The old English gate lies near the railway station; and close by are the two turrets, now used as Court-houses, which represent the Citadel erected by Henry the Eighth. The Market Cross is ancient; and both the Town Hall and the Guildhall date from the reign of Elizabeth.

Apart from its share in the old Border Minstrelsy, Carlisle has not much to boast of in the way of literary association; nor is its list of worthies a long or very brilliant one. Its poet—he is one of the *Dii minores*—Robert Anderson, born 1770, died 1833, has sketched the everyday life, manners, and customs of the Cumbrian peasantry with a certain rough vigour and a vividness of colouring which are not unattractive. Connected with the city, though not a native, was Robert Eglesfield, Queen Philippa's chaplain, who founded Queen's College, Oxford. Among the natives we find the learned Richard Muncaster, first master of Merchant Taylors' School, and afterwards head-

master of St. Paul's. He died in 1611, bequeathing to posterity a good many poems, plays, and educational works, to which posterity has proved profoundly indifferent. Then there were Dr. John Aglionby, chaplain to Elizabeth and James the First, and principal of Edmund Hall, Oxford; and the learned theologian, Thomas Tutter, Dean of Ripon, who died in 1676; and George Tutter—who, we suppose, was the Dean's son—author of "The Government of the Thoughts," died 1695; and Sawrey Gilpin, R.A., died 1807, who illustrated the writings of his brother, the "picturesque" Mr. William Gilpin; and the Orientalist, Joseph Dacre Carlyle, born 1758, died 1804, who edited "Specimens of Arabic Poetry" and the "Arabic Bible," and was at one time Chancellor of the diocese. An admirable scholar and historical writer, well known to the readers of the present day, the Rev. Mandell Creighton, hails from the Border City, on which he has written an interesting monograph.

In our elder novelists we sometimes get glimpses of merry Carlisle in connection with the adventures of runaway couples, bound for the blacksmith's "Shrine of Hymen," at Gretna Green, Carlisle being the last stage before they crossed the Border, and were "married in haste"—too often to "repent at leisure." Smollett's "Humphrey Clinker," Mr. Matthew Bramble, after his visit to Scotland, re-entered England by way of Carlisle, and met there with his missing friend Lis-mahagow. And the reader will not fail to recollect that Mr. William Black, in his idyllic romance "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," takes his "young Uhlan," with the charming Bell and Queen Tita, to "the red old city that is set amid beautiful green meadows interlaced with streams," and the travellers visit the Castle, and, leaning on the parapets of red stone, gaze away up to the north, where the Scotch hills bound the horizon. "It is a pretty landscape that lies around Carlisle Castle—the bright and grassy meadows through which the Eden winds, the woods and heights of the country beyond, the far stretches of sand at the mouth of the Solway, and the blue line of hills telling of the wilder regions of Scotland."

It may be added that in the Whistle-craft burlesque epic on King Arthur and the Round Table, by Hookham Frere, the first canto contains an amusing de-

scription of King Arthur's Christmas at Carlisle, beginning:

The great King Arthur made a sumptuous Feast,
And held his Royal Christmas at Carlisle.

"BENEFIT OF CLERGY."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

LILY was "setting her room tidy." This process often took place, and was extremely simple. It consisted in turning out on to the floor the contents of every drawer and box she possessed, contemplating the heap thus made from every possible point of view, and then thrusting the component parts back into their respective receptacles in a confusion slightly increased by their temporary sojourn elsewhere.

On this particular occasion that consummation had been delayed. For nearly an hour Lily had been sitting on the floor beside the heap, her hands clasped round her knees, which were drawn up to make a resting-place for her head. Her face was turned towards a low window opposite to her, and there was an odd gravity about her eyes, an unusually serious turn in the corners of her mouth. She was in an irritated frame of mind. Throughout luncheon Mr. Heathcote had been absolutely silent, and had resisted all her efforts to make him talk. She had tried various subjects. The parish, first; but that had been promptly let drop by her uncle. The curates; but that had not been so much as taken up by him. Finally, and very tentatively, she had tried to begin a literary discussion by the somewhat wide remark that she liked Besant's novels. To which the Vicar had responded, irrelevantly:

"Did you ask me if I had done, Lily? I am quite ready, my dear," and had forthwith risen and gone to his study.

It was very stupid of him, Lily said to herself, indignantly—very stupid. He was always thinking of those dry old books in the study, or the papers covered with small, crabbed writing, which, as Lily put it, "littered" his study table.

"People should sometimes amuse other people," said poor Lily, aloud and incoherently, but pathetically. She was feeling decidedly bored. There was nothing interesting to be done. It was dull to go for a walk alone; and Mr. Maynard was out, she knew, somewhere; and Mr. Smith had probably got some-

thing tiresome to do for her uncle. It must be so; for, if it had been possible, he would have turned up again to play tennis, as he had promised her.

It was all very provoking, she thought. She gave herself a twist round, and began idly playing with some of the odds and ends which were nearest to her in the heap at her side.

Lily possessed no jewel-case. If she had it would assuredly never have contained its lawful contents; for she threw each and any of her trinkets into the nearest drawer or box when she had done wearing it, and never thought of it till she wanted it again. So, mixed with ribbons, laces, and so forth, her brooches, necklaces, and bangles at this moment strewed the floor. She picked up one after another idly, and put them down again quickly. Suddenly she gave a pleased exclamation.

"What ages since I saw that!" she said. "Who would have thought of it's being twisted in that lace?" and her fingers hastily disentangled a little delicate gold bangle. "When did I have it last?" she went on musingly. "Oh, I remember. I don't believe I've ever seen it since last summer; not since I was at Farnborough. At Mrs. Rose's garden affair I wore it. I remember—I remember, quite."

Lily turned the tiny thing over and over slowly; but she was not looking at it. Her eyes were fixed on the bit of bright blue summer sky she could see through the low window; but they grew graver and softer, somehow. The wild, mischievous light died out of them. Suddenly Lily hid her face on her knees, and the bangle slipped unheeded to the floor. It was a long while ago since that garden-party; but she remembered it well, very well. She had lost that bangle in an excited set at tennis. Who was it who had looked for it and brought it to her? Lily pressed her face lower and lower on to her knees; but she saw, far more distinctly than she had seen the blue sky, a tall, upright figure, a pair of keen eyes in a dark, resolute face; a face which she knew had worn a very different look for her from that which it bore for any one else. But no—and Lily shook herself indignantly—no. It must be her fancy; it was only fancy; he had never cared for her; he would have come and told her so, surely, if it had been true; but he had made her think so, he had, indeed. Then Lily's face turned a brighter crimson in its hiding-place. What was

she thinking of? The head-master of a great public school had other things to think of than a little girl whom he had met by chance when she was staying with one of his house-masters. Then he knew so many people, nice people, nice girls; and they all liked him, every one did. Perhaps he was married by now to one of them. Most likely, Lily thought, with a curious, aching feeling; but she wished she knew. She thought how foolish she had been not to write to Mrs. Rose more often, to keep up a correspondence which would at least remind her of that happy summer visit, and tell her what every one was doing at Farnborough. Every one? No; only what one person was doing.

All at once Lily jumped up from the floor, and unlocked a small drawer in a queer, little tiny cabinet, the contents of which had not shared in the common earthquake. But when she had unlocked it, she took out what she wanted rather slowly. It was a photograph—a group of all the masters at Farnborough, including Mr. Rose. It was not to look at Mr. Rose, however, that Lily had taken it from its place. Her eyes here fixed on the tall, thin figure which stood behind all the others, leaning one firm hand on the shoulder of the man who stood nearest to him, but looking—or she fancied so—rather lonely. She looked, and looked, and her face grew graver and graver—it altered into a face that Mr. Smith and Mr. Maynard had never seen.

Suddenly the tea-bell rang. Lily glanced incredulously at her little American timepiece; but it was indeed five o'clock. She put her photograph away carefully first, then, with both arms, seized the heap on the floor, forced into three drawers the contents of six, and rushed downstairs to make tea.

Mr. Heathcote's afternoon had been troubled, indeed, and it was followed by a nearly sleepless night. He could think of no satisfactory way of arranging matters; and the next morning came without his having arrived at any conclusion whatever. He had thought of sending Lily away; but he dismissed that thought almost without consideration; he could not turn his brother's child from the only home she had; this was not to be thought of under any circumstances. His second impulse was, naturally, to dismiss Smith and Maynard. But a little reflection showed him that this course was almost as impracticable

as the other. Mr. Smith and Mr. Maynard would most assuredly refuse to leave Sweet Ancott without some really well-founded reason; and what could he give them? He could not simply say that they were idle; he could not say that they ran after his niece; neither of these reasons, cogent as they were in practice, was solid enough in theory to justify him in taking a step which would seriously injure both men in their future career as lights—or otherwise—of the Church.

All these arguments went through the Vicar's mind, again and again, in the same hopeless, inconsequent way.

Finally, next morning, after a still more abstracted and silent breakfast time, he decided to dismiss the whole subject from his thoughts for the time being, and to seek some rest and peace in reverting to Gregory of Nyssa.

He sought the calm of his study, and in the course of his first half-hour's work, made an important discovery of a hitherto unremarked incident in the early career of that Father. He was triumphantly proceeding to condense this invaluable information into two neat paragraphs—he had completely forgotten the existence of such modern subjects of interest as Lily, or his curates—when his first sentence was scattered to the winds by a hasty, not to say rampant knock at his study door, followed by the instant appearance of the parish clerk, John Griffiths. He was old, and at this moment, breathless, and his words came in gasps:

"Will you—excusing me being so hasty, sir—but will you come along to the church and marry that there couple, Lucy Brown and them? They've been waiting most an hour; and I can't get no one else. I'll tell you, sir—arterwards—excuse me a-hurryin' of you, but they're that nasty about being kep' waiting."

The Vicar grasped only the bare fact that he was wanted at the church. Seizing his hat and coat, he meekly followed his impatient henchman across the field which separated his house from the church, donned his surplice, and began the service mechanically, went through it in a bewildered way, and finally, having bidden the rosy, laughing girl who was the bride, to "be not afraid with any amazement," and superintended the efforts at penmanship with which she and her new-made lord graced the register, he sat down in the vestry chair to think over things, with the old clerk to help him, while she was

escorted into the summer morning air and wedded life.

John Griffiths, after years of service, considered himself, and wished the parish to consider him, as the active partner in the ecclesiastical concern which embraced the Vicar as its useful but unimportant member. As to the curates, they were his thorn in the flesh. He disobeyed their orders on every possible occasion; gave them, in their presence, most grudging deference; and, among his associates in the village, invariably referred to them in their absence as "them boys." This morning he was thoroughly happy. He had a flagrant case of defection on their part to bring before their master; and he meant to impart the details with all impressive care and deliberation.

"I was a-settin' on the bench in my back-garden"—he began, as he took the Vicar's surplice from his shoulders and hung it on the old pegs which had held surplices for at least three hundred years—"I was a-settin' in the sun, when my missus says to me, 'John,' she says, 'that there couple's gone along. I see them from the window. You go on up to church, or you'll be late.' But they was so early like, I didn't hurry for all she said, and when I got there it was ten minutes to eleven still. So I waited and they waited, till it had gone eleven. Then I went to the gate to look for Mr. Maynard, knowin' as how you said a Sunday as he was to marry them—"

"And he perfectly understood me," put in the Vicar.

"But I couldn't see him; and I went back and waited a bit by the door. It was near half-past eleven when the young man as was to be married came to ask me if no one weren't coming to do it. So I went along to fetch Mr. Maynard; but he weren't at home. So then I went up to Mr. Smith's, thinking he might be there; or, if he weren't, I could tell t'other to come along. But they wasn't there— Yes, sir, I'll see to them pens, sir," as the Vicar made an impatient sound over the copying of the certificates, which was set down by his clerk to shortcomings for which he himself was greatly responsible, having used the pens the day before in oiling a refractory lock. "Well, sir, as I was a-saying, they wasn't there, and Mrs. Brown, she says to me—never could abear that woman—she says: 'Go and tell your master to look arter 'em,' she says. 'Mr. Smith, he went out with

Miss Heathcote at ten o'clock, to Friar's Dell; so I heard her say when she was waitin' in the road. And Mr. Maynard, he come along here askin' for Mr. Smith, and when I told him where he was, he just cut and run after 'em like mad. That's where they are, both on 'em; and if you want 'em I'm sorry for you.' So I came my ways, and never said good morning, nor nothink to her, never could abide her impudence, and I fetched you, sir, so it's all right as far as the couple's concerned."

The old clerk turned round from fumbling with the surplices and cassocks, and met the Vicar's face. The look he saw there apparently changed the current of his thoughts, for the old man began hastily to plead for his enemies.

"Bless you, sir, they ain't nothink but two boys, and not much at that. I wouldn't worrit myself so much; we was young once; and Miss Lily—well, begging your pardon, sir, I never seed nothing so pretty for a girl."

"Good morning, John," was all the answer the Vicar gave to him; he was absently looking for his hat and stick. When he discovered them he took them still more absently into his hand, and not until he was half way across the churchyard did it occur to him that a hat was more useful when worn on the head than when carried in the hand. As he stopped to put it on, his eyes wandered over the hills and moors before him; perhaps, unconsciously, they directed his thoughts towards the part of the clerk's story, which he had hardly remarked in the telling—the place which was the destination of the disturbers of his peace.

Friar's Dell was a tiny copse, about three miles out of Sweet Ancott. It was covered, in summer, with the rarest and loveliest ferns in the whole of Devon, it was said.

The Vicar remembered, with a groan, that Lily had said a few days since, at tea time, that she meant to make a fernery. Little had he dreamt of all the words implied. As he stood there, thinking, it suddenly occurred to him that he, too, would go to Friar's Dell; go to Friar's Dell for no ferns, no exercise, no diversion, but to meet them on their way home, and at least say to Mr. Maynard what he thought of this—this complete oblivion of duty. Smith, too, would certainly profit by the firm, calm, verbal chastisement the Vicar felt at that moment able and even inspired to give.

So he started briskly enough, and kept up a pace which lasted quite through the first mile. Energetic action was a relief in his present state of agitation, and, step by step, moment by moment, the spoken reproof for Maynard grew more forcible and well arranged in the Vicar's mind; so much so that he felt it would settle everything, and there would be no need to have recourse to that last resort which had, in the watches of his sleepless night, suggested itself to him, namely, to consult the Bishop, who was coming in two days to Sweet Ancott, to hold a confirmation. This was really unnecessary, he thought now, with a glow of satisfaction. Every man ought to be able to settle the affairs of his own parish; he of course would be able to do so.

He was strolling now in the middle of the road, gazing on the ground, as was his custom. Suddenly a kind of rushing in the air made him look up. Three figures dashed round the corner just in front and past the startled man, without looking at him, gasping as they flew. One was hatless. The hat of the second was jammed on to his eyes, and the third, a little in advance of these two, was a girl—a girl with curly hair standing out all round her hot face.

On they flew, and the girl's scarlet frock flew on in front to the bottom of the hill, where they stopped short at what was evidently a winning-post—some broken old wayside riding steps. The owner of the hat tore it off, mounted them, and, waving it in the air, said, in stentorian tones—borne on the wind to the breathless Vicar—"Three cheers for Miss Heathcote. Maynard, you didn't run fair!"

Settle things in his own parish! The Vicar sat down on the nearest stone heap and began to count the hours to the confirmation day. He would wait till then.

That evening, two other individuals in Sweet Ancott came to precisely the same decision. Mr. Maynard and Mr. Smith were sitting together in the rooms of the latter. They were having tea together in a fashion peculiarly their own, and much practised by them. The teapot reposed on the fender, their cups on the mantelpiece. From time to time, one or the other of them rose, grasped the teapot, walked about contemplatively for a few moments, then, suddenly finding his cup, filled it, drank thereof, and returned to his easy-chair. They had been arguing so hotly that a kind of exhaustion had reduced them to temporary silence. But it

was very temporary, and Mr. Maynard broke it by saying, as he brandished the teapot in his hand :

"Well, Smith, you'll let me have the first chance with him."

"With her, do you mean, old fellow?"

"No, you know I don't mean with her. Haven't we just had that out? You're so abominably given to saying a thing fifty times. We've just decided that it is utterly impossible to tell from her manner which of us has the best chance, or if either of us has the faintest. She is always just the same to you as she is to me."

"She gave me her photograph."

"She's sent for one for me, so there. Come, this is childish. I mean to speak to him. I'm sure to get straight with him is the thing, and if you do that first, I shan't have a chance, Smith. He's put out with me about that unlucky wedding this morning, you see."

Mr. Smith put down his tea-cup carefully.

"What do you say to tossing for it?" said he. "It's fair, at any rate."

"Your landlady will come up, or something."

"Not she. Come on."

"All right; but it's agreed we leave it till after Thursday, any way?"

"We've settled that. Here's a shilling. Heads you; tails me."

Mr. Smith proceeded to toss with a gravity befitting the occasion. The first time it came down heads; the second, tails. The third time, by some unexpected twist of Mr. Smith's hand, it fell into the fender. Instantly might be beheld the spectacle of two reverend gentlemen in clerical garb peering eagerly and intently into the ashes of a very untidy grate. Mr. Maynard rose first, in triumphant energy.

"Heads!" he exclaimed, joyfully.

"Friday morning I shall tackle him, when the Bishop and all the confirmation is well off his mind. Friday morning! Cheer up, Smith, it might just as easily have been you. You can have your turn at him in the afternoon."

This reasoning hardly appeared to cheer Mr. Smith, who relapsed into the depths of his arm-chair, and did not arise from it again till his clerical brother parted from him at ten o'clock.

The confirmation day was bright and sunny, and Sweet Ancott wore a kind of refined and elevated bank-holiday air, owing chiefly to the lingering groups of

friends and relations who had brought the girls and boys who stood waiting by the churchyard-gate—waiting for the Bishop, who was rather late.

Ten minutes went by, and then his carriage drove into the Vicarage gates, and the Bishop got out quickly. Mr. Heathcote met him at the door, and took him into the dining-room, which was full of clergy, who presented that ill-assorted, confused appearance inseparable from a body of men whose only similarity lies in their dress. They were rather eagerly awaiting the Bishop. He had recently been appointed, and had not yet undergone the ordeal by fire of scathing criticism, through which the clergy are wont to pass their chief shepherds. His outward appearance told them but little. The man who faced the critical roomful as if he were unaware of any scrutiny, was a man in the prime of life; young, he might have well been called, for at forty-two he looked thirty-two, and yet there was a dignity and a firmness about that tall, thin figure, and the resolute, dark face with the keen eyes, that showed that whatever, in the eyes of his clergy, the Bishop might lack in years was fully made up for in power. He came rather slowly up the long room, and stood looking keenly about him, while a long five minutes went by in the arrangement of details. Then Mr. Heathcote carried him off to robe; and the confused group of clergy sorted itself into a still more confused procession—for into the clerical mind but little idea of scenic effect seems to enter; and invariably on these occasions the tallest man present will request the shortest available brother to walk with him; while the broadest, and most aggressively cheerful parson, whose whole physique speaks of a wide enjoyment of all mundane delights, will find some young emaciated Saint Anthony to bear him company.

On their return from the church they reassembled in the Rectory dining-room, where, as they drank their coffee, one after another of his flock sought the Bishop's pastoral aid. These moments are jealously seized and eagerly used by Vicars with refractory schoolmasters, impending school-boards, obstructive churchwardens, and all the thousand and one hitches which occur in ecclesiastical machinery, and which, by virtue of his office, apparently, the Bishop must put right with a touch. But their diocesan won no golden opinions from his clergy on this his first public appearance in

his diocese. He listened, but he listened absently to the many stories which came before him. He manifestly gazed, during their recital, at some object over the reciter's shoulders. His attention was obviously elsewhere; he confused schoolmasters, churchwardens, and aggressive dissenters together in his comments in a manner which greatly injured and insulted the sufferers under each separate infliction.

One by one his flock left him, with their grievances unredressed; and most of them spent the period of their drive home in saying, with variations, to the wife, sister, cousin, or aunt who had accompanied them:

"Most unsatisfactory; quite unequal to the duties of the position! Often the way with these new appointments though; too young, far too young: and fresh from a head-mastership. No parochial experience whatever—none."

Mr. Heathcote himself was taken aback when, the last of these ill-used mortals having departed, he said anxiously to the Bishop:

"I have several matters I should wish to talk over with your lordship, if you have half an hour at your disposal." And only received the answer:

"To-morrow, Mr. Heathcote, to-morrow. I am staying, as you know, at Elmfield, to-night, and shall have the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow morning."

Then the Bishop turned hastily round.

"Where is Miss Heathcote?" he said.

"I have not said good-bye to her."

At about five minutes before twelve on Friday morning Mr. Maynard arrived, asked for the Vicar, and was shown into the study, where Mr. Heathcote sat with a blank sheet before him. He had done no work that morning as yet. Ideas failed him; argument, even on the well-beloved theme, was beyond his power.

Mr. Maynard sat down, leaning his stick slowly and carefully against the Vicar's writing-table. During his introductory remarks on the weather, the subject of his visit had rapidly divested itself of all that flowing drapery of graceful phrases in which he had clothed it during his walk thither, and, while he sought for it fresh garniture of words, he paused. In the pause, the mantelpiece clock struck twelve. The same instant the door-bell rang, sounding rather loudly through the quiet house. Another moment, and Mr. Smith was shown in.

"It's afternoon, Maynard," he said, sotto voce, as he passed him. "Afternoon now. You had the morning, you know."

Mr. Maynard glared grimly; but preserved a freezing and foreboding silence.

Then, after greeting the Vicar, Mr. Smith drew up a chair on the other side of the good man. The position of the trio was sufficiently remarkable. Mr. Heathcote sat at his writing-table, facing the door, his eyes fixed musingly on the old brown volumes which were all that came within his range of vision.

Mr. Smith, who was on the right hand side, and exactly opposite the window, had the wide, sloping, sunshiny lawn and the rhododendron thicket in the Vicarage garden to assist his imagination. Mr. Maynard, at the other corner, found his horizon limited to Mr. Smith's profile, upon which he gazed without any of the attention which that interesting object demanded.

There was a silence after Mr. Smith's greeting, and the Vicar glanced, a trifle wonderingly, at his two curates.

"Mr. Heathcote," began Mr. Maynard, at length, with a jerk which became a kind of twist of his whole person, when the Vicar turned his dim, enquiring gaze, full on him. "I wish—to ask you—I wish to—to—marry—"

"Excuse me, sir," broke in Mr. Smith, with a contemptuous look at Mr. Maynard, and a serene consciousness of his own prepared and perfect phraseology. "I am here to propose to you, formally, for the hand of—"

But Mr. Smith broke off all at once, got up with a suddenness that sent his chair backwards to the floor, and walked to the window without saying another word.

Mr. Maynard lifted his eyes from the carpet, whence he had been trying to extract a crushing declamation, and glanced in astonishment at his fellow-worker.

Mr. Smith's expression was undergoing a rapid and remarkable series of changes. It altered from amazement to incredulity, and from incredulity to stupefaction. Mr. Maynard looked steadily at him for an instant; then being unable, even at that moment, to resist the craving of his own mind for information, rose and followed him to the window, when his own expression rapidly underwent the same process as he caught at the window-frame, and gasped for breath.

The Vicar, having realised slowly that his curates, who had come to see him, were

now concentrating their attention on some wholly different matter, and that matter one in his own garden, turned round his chair, left it, and joined them. Together, the three men gazed out of the window on to the sloping lawn; together, the three pairs of eyes met the sight before them. Coming up the grass was the tall, thin figure of the Bishop. But his lordship was not walking with his usual long, firm stride, his step was not his own rapid tread.

For one of his arms encircled a slender waist, his other was stretched out that his hand might grasp a little brown hand; and as near to his shoulder as possible, considering their respective heights, lay Lily's rough, curly head.

An instant later, Mr. Maynard turned and made an exit, in the course of which the Vicar's ink, papers, and letter weights came to one common ruin on the floor; Mr. Smith, in following him, caught in the carpet, tripped, fell prostrate, picked himself up, followed him out, and banged the door before the Vicar had realised that they had stirred. Then he suddenly opened the glass doors of the window as if to let in more air. But it was not until Lily and the Bishop had reached the threshold that he found his voice.

"Lily!" he gasped.

"Uncle!" she responded, with a mischievous ring in her voice, a laugh in her downcast eyes, and cheeks that matched her scarlet frock. "Uncle, he was coming—to call on you. I was in the garden and he—called on me first. You see, I knew him ever so long ago—last summer—and it only took a short call—to—to—ask me; and—you must say yes—I have."

NOISE.

THE dweller in London—and to a lesser degree in any other of our large towns—has to put up with many annoyances: some of a kind which cannot be prevented, others which are certainly capable of being minimised; and amongst these latter there is none more aggravating, none more harmful than noise. Few realise what noise really means and implies—a disturbance not merely of the ears, but of the brain and nerves, is involved by the continual rattle and roar with which we are surrounded; and physicians tell us that nervous ailments are frequently produced—more frequently rendered doubly

severe—by the continued tension thus called into existence.

It is only for a very few hours in the dead of the night that the Londoner is free from noise of one kind or another. In the small hours of the morning the rumble of carts and vans, on their way to the early markets, commences.

While most people would still fain be in the arms of Morpheus, the milkman arrives, and thinks fit to announce his advent by that fearful and inimitable sound in which his species delight. Presumably, it was once a way of pronouncing "milk;" but now the keenest ear would fail to distinguish the slightest resemblance to that word in the unmusical howl which issues from the milkman's iron-lined throat.

The boy who delivers the paper finds himself unable to discharge part of his burden at your door without a nondescript sound that seems based upon the more ambitious vocal efforts of the milkman.

The thundering double knock of the postman—an earnest of many more that are to come during the day—proclaims his presence far down the street, gradually approaching nearer and nearer until it sounds with a crash upon the portal.

And so it goes on all the day through. Every tradesman who comes to the door is distinguished by a different variety of yell. Butcher, baker, and greengrocer all announce themselves to the inmates of the house they serve, and of three or four on either side of it, with a characteristic, but invariably disagreeable noise.

When Gay wrote his "Trivia," he did not fail to make mention of the variety of sounds that strike upon the ear of one strolling through the streets of London; but what would we not give to-day for the comparative quiet that reigned on the banks of the Thames in the last century?

A story is told that, in the olden days, every one in the world agreed to shout at the same moment, so that it might be found how great a noise could be produced. The eventful moment arrived, and was marked by a silence such as the world had never known before, nor ever will again. Every one had listened to hear the rest of the world shout; and for once quiet reigned supreme. Nowadays, it is all the other way—every one shouts; no one is silent.

The railway-whistle fiend is perhaps responsible for the most aggravating form of noise that goes to swell the general uproar of the metropolis. Those who are fated

to live where the whizz and rattle of the underground trains are within audible distance, find them quite sufficient to try the strongest nerves. But this is not the view which the engine-driver takes of the case. At all hours of the day and night he springs the shrill blast of his steam-whistle upon the ears of a long-suffering public; and however accustomed one may become to other noises, this is one which never loses any of its horrors. The abuse has been the cause of lengthy correspondence in influential journals; but it seems perennial, and will probably never be put an end to until some of the directors of the line are made to live where they are exposed to the torture which their men inflict upon others.

The noise made by children is twice as noticeable in town as in the country. A merry, shouting, laughing gang racing wildly down the road, is, in the country, a pleasant indication of the health and happiness of the little ones; in town, it comes as an addition to the already far too numerous distressing sounds, and makes us wonder whether there was ever a time when we, too, knew not the meaning of the word nerves. It is, of course, hopeless and foolish to expect that the city should ever be as free from noise as the country. Part of the penalty of living in a large centre of population, is the participation in those noises that must exist if life is to be carried on within its boundaries.

There is no reason why we should all, like Carlyle, call Heaven and earth to witness the depravity of every dog that barks, or every cock that hails the approach of dawn; but it is impossible to help thinking that something might be done towards putting a stop to the pandemonium which we all so cordially detest. Why should not every one, for instance, follow the example of a courageous friend of the writer's—as he is happy to say that he has done himself—and tell his tradesmen that, unless their assistants can deliver the goods they bring without any further noise than is absolutely necessary, he will take his custom elsewhere? The squall of the milkman, and yell of the butcher, would soon become things of the past; for these individuals would find that they must restrain their vocal efforts, and when the first unaccustomed feeling had worn off, would no doubt be as glad to spare their throats as the world in general would be to be spared the unmelodious sounds which are wont to issue from them.

The organ-grinders and the brass band are contributors to the great sum-total of noise, who should be put down with a rigorous hand. There are some people who take pleasure in listening to the sounds they evolve; but the most enthusiastic of them must surely find his enjoyment begin to pall upon him when he hears the same tune repeated time after time, with always the same false notes and disregard to time. One does not like to grudge any one a method of making a living, but in the enlightened days of the nineteenth century, the extortion of blackmail by these sturdy, able-bodied fellows seems a hardship which may reasonably afford an excuse for a growl. We do not hold the organ-grinder himself wholly to blame for the existing state of affairs. There are individuals who positively enjoy the gruesome sound of a barrel-organ, and who encourage the visits of its manipulator utterly regardless of the feelings of their more sensitive neighbours. Others make these pests of modern society welcome for the sake of the gratification which the discord of their instruments affords to the children of the house, and, by feeding them through the little ones, practically invite a weekly, or, it may be, even a daily repetition of the polkas and jigs, with all their dreadful runs and variations. Blessed with nerves of iron themselves, they never consider the positive injury which they are inflicting upon neighbours engaged in brain work which demands the most undivided attention; upon sufferers tossing on the bed of sickness; or upon nervous folk, who are rendered positively ill by the jingling din. There can hardly be greater torture to a really musical person than to be compelled to hear airs, beautiful in themselves, when distorted by the cylinder of a street-organ. If only those fortunate beings who are not distressed by the organ-grinder's efforts would consider that there may be a dozen people within hearing of his instrument who, for one of the causes we have enumerated, are almost driven to temporary madness while he whirls his handle, they would cease, we feel sure, from giving any encouragement to this gutter-plague, with the result that, finding his occupation gone, he would be forced to turn his hand to some more harmless way of making a living. These complaints may have a comic side to some people; but to thousands of others they are very real, and it is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of lives have been shortened, while hundreds are

daily, made miserable by wholly unnecessary noise.

In the barbarous olden days, a favourite kind of torture was to roll heavy cannon-balls about the floor of a room over one in which the person to be tortured was confined. The din produced had the effect of entirely banishing "tired nature's sweet restorer" from the eyes of this hapless mortal, and sooner or later, the want of quiet, and consequent rest, deprived him of life or reason. This torture has not been left behind like the rack and the thumb-screws, but still claims its victims. The weary brain is kept on the alert by the rattle of cabs long after it ought to have passed into a state of obliviousness, and when the disturbance dies away, is roused again long before the amount of rest necessary to recuperate it and fit it for another day's work has been obtained. Even when the brief lull which occurs in the course of every twenty-four hours does take place, the mischief that has been done continues, and the sleep that comes is restless and broken.

Many people pride themselves upon the fact that they can sleep in spite of the noise of the wheels which dash along the streets outside; but they do not consider that, though they may be asleep, the sensitive tympanum of the ear still receives the impressions the sound-waves convey to it, and passes them on to the brain. This unconscious hearing of sounds while asleep is the reason of the feeling of unrest that is so often experienced after a sleep that may have been of even more than the requisite duration. Every Londoner has noticed the comparatively invigorating effects of a night's rest in the country, and has probably put it down to fresh air and freedom from the cares of business. But a more important factor than these has been the absence of noise—and the consequent rest that his brain has been allowed.

We have already said that it is useless to expect in town the quiet that is so great a charm of the country; but while we grant that a certain amount of noise is a necessary evil in London, we ask, Why should there be so much of it? If every one could be brought to recognise that they have no greater right to inflict an unnecessary noise upon a fellow-creature than to deal him a blow, a far pleasanter, happier, and healthier state of life would be possible in London and other busy towns than is now the case.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold,"
"Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorpe," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

"I REALLY wouldn't do it, if I were you," cheerfully.

"Wouldn't you?" A trembling hand, which had lost almost the power of obeying the desperate will that guided it, dropped nerveless, and with it went the gleam of a revolver's barrel. "Why?" after a moment of supreme stupefaction.

"Well! For various reasons," went on the first speaker, in the same calm, even tones, seating himself on the broken old table adorning the room, and looking with steady eyes into the desperate face before him. "In the first place, it is against the law of Heaven. That, apparently, doesn't trouble you much," as a fierce grunt—a choked imprecation against all laws, Divine or otherwise—broke from the man with whom he was so calmly arguing. "In the second, it is the act of a coward; and in the third, it would make a considerable mess in the room."

The other man stared round the miserable garret with raging eyes.

"It wouldn't do much harm here, at any rate." Then, turning savagely on the young man again: "Would it?" leveling the revolver now straight at that young man's own head.

"No. It certainly wouldn't," replied the latter, with a calm, but decided conviction, apparently not in the least disturbed by the slightly awkward position in which he found himself. "I never saw such a hole in my life," he went on, not even taking his hands out of his pockets. "No human creature—not even a dog—should live here."

"Yet I live here!"

The young man felt that he could pretty well explain why he did live here. It was the last lair left to a man with the habits indulged in by Charles Wilton.

In his study of human nature, Mr. Anthony Melvin, who had arrived a fortnight previously in London, from America, had been led to this miserable lodging-house in one of the slums of the East End. He had, as far as Charles Wilton was concerned, arrived only just in time. Opening a door in the house by mistake, he had found one of the tenants in the act of

raising a revolver to his own head. It was a critical instant. If the young man had made the slightest mistake, it would have been all over with Wilton. Perhaps Anthony Melvin himself. For the desperate man only needed the slightest provocation to shoot first his counsellor and then himself.

Anthony, though his heart beat quicker for the miserable human soul so fiercely bent on sending itself into Eternity, walked into the room, as if the most ordinary scene were being enacted there. Before Wilton had time to decide whether he would shoot the intruder or himself, Anthony, in the most matter-of-fact tone, advised him to let himself alone, at any rate.

"Bless you," he went on cheerfully now, as the revolver still covered him, "I shouldn't do that either. I don't want any man to swing for me."

Wilton glared at him for a second in speechless amazement and rage. Then he burst into hoarse, tuneless laughter.

"Why did you come here?" he asked. "If it is to preach at me, you had better get out. If it's to see the holes human beings can live in, you can look round, and then go away and write an article on it."

"I'm not a parson; unfortunately I am not a journalist, either, or I might make some fine copy out of it. What an awful hole!"

"It's good enough to die in. I'm starving. Yes; I've been drinking. The last few coppers I had weren't enough to feed me; but they gave me brandy, which was food and warmth in one. Forgetfulness, too! Then I came to, and remembered that to-morrow I shouldn't have even this shelter; so I decided to put myself beyond the need of it. The parish will be bound then to provide me with six feet of ground;" and he laughed the same ugly laugh.

A sudden thought of other men—aye, women, too, and children, starving, despairing, perishing for warmth and help in this great East End, overwhelmed Anthony.

"There's a lot to be done here," he exclaimed, involuntarily. "I don't think I'll go back to Sydney, after all."

The man started.

"Sydney! Do you know Sydney?"

"I was born there," turning with relief to a less painful subject.

"I knew it once," sullenly; "before I came—— Why did you come and inter-

fere?" with a return of the despairing rage.

"Because your time hasn't come yet," with an earnestness he had not yet shown. Then, in a lighter tone, rising from the table: "Come and take a walk back with me to my diggings."

He pulled out a cigar-case, and offered it to the man, who had been a gentleman once, too.

Wilton stared at him. But his eyes had lost their fierce bitterness. His lips twitched. Then, for the first time, he laid the revolver down on the table.

"You don't mean——"

"I mean that I want you to come with me. A walk will do you good; and I'll be glad of your company."

There was a moment's silence. Then Wilton spoke:

"I'll come," he said. "If you go back on your invitation, only say the word, and I'll clear out. Here, take that. When the drink is on me, I go mad."

He thrust the revolver into Anthony's hand.

The young man coolly unloaded it, and dropped it into his great-coat pocket.

"What is your name?" asked Wilton, when they reached the street.

"Anthony St. John Melvin, at your service," said Anthony, with a light laugh. "I ought to have introduced myself before."

"Anthony St. John Melvin!" Wilton stood still on the pavement, his face pale. He looked strangely at the young man. "I might have seen the likeness," he murmured. "To think——"

He turned and walked on hurriedly down the street, with a look on his face which made Anthony not care to question him.

They reached Anthony's chambers at last, and a good dinner was soon set before them. But Wilton, starving as he had been, could not do justice to it. When discharged from the Riverbridge Infirmary, he was still far from recovered. He had had an interview with Aston, who had supplied him with money to come to London. There, friendless and hopeless, weakened in mind and body by his late self-inflicted wound, he had relapsed into his old courses, which had culminated in this fresh attempt at suicide. As he sat in Anthony's chambers, trying to eat, he found himself every moment less able to vanquish the faintness stealing over him. It conquered him at last; and, two hours

later, he lay on Anthony's bed, in for a fresh illness, while that young man, apparently accepting it as the most matter-of-fact event in the world, prepared to nurse the destitute, dissipated stranger, he had, only that afternoon, discovered in a miserable lodging-house of a back slum.

It took a great deal to upset the mental equilibrium of Mr. Anthony Melvin.

CHAPTER VIII.

FEBRUARY was drawing to its close. Riverbridge was full of excitement. The great social event of the year was coming off—The Bachelors' Ball. As it was the one ball of the town, it can be imagined the bustle and eager anticipation that reigned in its households. Aston was one of the stewards. Anthony Melvin, absorbed in the interesting task of nursing Wilton back to life, had not yet had time to come down to Riverbridge to see Daisy; but he promised to try and come to the ball. He did not mention the name of the man he had rescued; only saying, as an excuse for his delay in coming to see her, that he had found some very interesting work. Wilton, after three weeks' illness, was slowly mending. The day of the ball arrived. Aston, who had been into a neighbouring town, brought Daisy an exquisite bouquet of white roses and gardenias.

"Oh! How did you guess I was so fond of them!" she exclaimed, touching the creamy, fragrant petals with delight. "Anthony always used to bring me some when I went to dances in Germany."

He turned on his heel, and walked out of the room.

"It's his rheumatism," said Miss Ross, apologetically. "It's these east winds. Mine has been dreadful; but I don't say anything about it," with a half-suppressed groan. "If it weren't for you, I shouldn't go to-night."

"Please don't run any risk."

"Oh, yes; I shall go," hastily. Miss Ross had a new silk gown for the occasion, and was looking forward to the ball with as much eagerness as any girl in the town. "Brend would be vexed if I didn't chaperon you."

There came an energetic ring at the door-bell, which made Miss Ross jump, and Daisy run out of the room.

"It's Anthony!" she cried, with a glad laugh. "He always rings as if he wanted to wake the Seven Sleepers."

A second or two later she returned, fol-

lowed by Anthony Melvin. Miss Ross looked at him curiously. She was really interested in the young man of whom she had heard so much.

She saw a tall, well-knit figure, and a strong face, rather plain than otherwise. Indeed, but for the eyes and beautiful square white teeth, some indiscriminating persons might have called him ugly. But even they would only have held that opinion when the face was in repose. When it smiled, or was moved in any way, the change in it was wonderful.

"Just fancy, Miss Ross," Daisy exclaimed, introducing him, "he very nearly didn't come after all. 'Important business.' What rubbish! I would never have forgiven you—never!"

The young man laughed, and Miss Ross wondered why she had thought him plain.

"Well, I felt obliged to come to bring you these. I was afraid they would get spoilt in the post."

He handed her a florist's box.

"Oh, Anthony! How good of you! It reminds me of our dances in Germany. How we used to enjoy them! And Mr. Aston has just brought me such a lovely bouquet, too."

"But you will wear mine," rather hastily.

"I'll put every one on, both of yours and his, if I look like a dancing May-pole," with a merry laugh. "Mr. Aston has gone down to those tiresome mills again, I dare say. But he will be back soon."

As they had not met since Daisy left Germany, they found plenty to say to each other. Aston, coming in for a few moments before they dressed for dinner, found them laughing and talking like a schoolgirl and boy, and making Miss Ross laugh too.

Daisy introduced Anthony. Aston's manner was civil, but cold; and Daisy was a little hurt by it. The dinner scarcely improved matters. Aston hardly said a word, and Daisy exerted herself to talk so that Anthony should not notice his host's moody silence. She and Miss Ross had decided to put on their ball-dresses after dinner, and so they retired to their rooms as soon as it was over. Daisy was dressed first.

It was a bitterly cold night, and she shivered a little as she left her warm bedroom and met the chill of the staircase. She ran downstairs quickly to hurry into the warmth again. She hastily opened the dining-room door.

"If you marry her, I'll disgrace you. I'll bring the curse down on your head. It is darkening the house now——"

The fierce words reached Daisy's ear as she stood on the threshold. But the slight noise she had made had been heard. The words ceased abruptly, and the next moment the housekeeper appeared from behind the screen, and hurried to the door.

Daisy shrank aside as she passed through. But the woman cast at her such a look of malevolent hate, that it sent the indignant blood rushing through her veins. She drew herself up, and passed on into the dining-room, shutting the door on the retreating figure of the housekeeper. Then the anger caused by the intolerable insolence of the woman faded in a chill sense of wonder and repulsion.

Who was she? How dared she speak such words to her master? What was there between the two?

With a violent effort she conquered her disgust and anger, and walked on towards the farther room.

But Aston, standing before the dining-room fire, caught sight of her. He called her.

For a second she hesitated, then came coldly and proudly forward. He stood staring at her as she advanced into the light as if she had been a ghost.

Her ball-dress was white. Soft, falling veils of tulle over silk. The low bodice and short sleeves left bare the lovely arms and throat. It was the first time he had ever seen her in full evening-dress. She seemed like a vision from another world. There was a half-wreath of white roses edging the low bodice. There were knots of them on the tiny, filmy sleeves. There was a great bouquet of them in her ungloved hand. The whole air about her was fragrant with their scent.

What was it that made him think of flowers at dead men's graves?

She was frightened at his strange look, and her indignation died.

"What was it?" she exclaimed.

"Daisy!" it was the first time he had used her Christian name, "how beautiful you are! How could you bear to stay so long with us in this gloomy house? What shall we do when you go away?"

"But I am not going!" scarcely knowing what she said.

"I am not mad," he said, with an attempt at a laugh; "but you made me suddenly think of the darkness of my own life."

"Your life? Everything seems to go so well with you. If you have any trouble," remembering how kind he had been to her, and infinitely touched by the look on his face, "can I help you a little? I should like——"

"You would like to help me!" He caught her hands in his. "Will you promise to help me if ever I need your aid?"

She flushed, stirred like a reed by the fiery breath of his passion. Her womanhood was waking beneath the force of his manhood, as the sun awakens a bud into the perfect flower.

"Will you not promise?" he cried, with passionate pleading. "I am so unhappy!"

"Yes, I promise," she said, faintly, scarcely knowing what she said.

Happily the door opened, and he released her hands. She drew sharply back from him, intensely grateful for the sight of Miss Ross.

The ball was held in the Assembly Rooms. They were old-fashioned and shabby, as were most of the houses and buildings of Riverbridge. But the entertainments given there were too few to make it worth the town's while to re-paint and re-decorate. But the floor was fairly good, and there was plenty of room. At the upper end was a tall, broad mirror, with tarnished gilt frame. Beneath it was a long seat, covered with faded crimson velvet. To this position of honour, Miss Ross conducted Daisy, escorted by the two men.

Their arrival caused a little stir in the room. Daisy's beauty and wonderful toilette, which was the prettiest ball-dress in the room, excited universal admiration. Aston, of course, was always an object of interest to the female portion, at least, of Riverbridge society; while the pale-faced, rather nonchalant-looking young stranger who accompanied them, and whose appearance was decidedly distinguished, also excited favourable notice.

Miss Ross was always popular, and managed to keep friends with the various social factions of a little provincial town in a manner that excited Daisy's amusement and admiration. Aston would laugh, too, with good-natured cynicism at her tact and cleverness, telling her that her time was spent in keeping in with the hounds, and running with the hare. To-night, she was surrounded with friendly chaperons, while Daisy, besieged with part-

ners, found herself soon in the whirl of dances. Anthony had claimed four waltzes on the way there. Aston, who did not dance, only asked her for a square. In the enjoyment of the ball she gradually forgot the troubled sense of uneasiness which that strange scene in the dining-room at Bridge House had left with her. In a vague way, she had felt frightened at the promise she had given.

But by the time Anthony came up to claim her for his second waltz, she was enjoying herself thoroughly. They were both beautiful dancers—by far the best in the room, there being few really good ones, though most of the men present considered themselves as such.

At the end of the waltz—during which they had scarcely spoken, content, with the enjoyment of youth, to glide round with light feet and graceful, rhythmic movement to the music—Daisy laughed.

"That was delightful! My feelings were dreadfully wounded in the last waltz, so were my toes. My last partner——"

"He was 'immense'!" said Anthony, leading her quickly out of the room, as the closing bars died away, to reach a comfortable seat before another couple seized it. "I did pity you!"

"But you shouldn't! It was quite thrown away. At first I pitied myself, till I found out my folly. He danced—that young man. He whirled me against sharp corners; he jerked me off my feet; he alighted on my toes; he shook me till I was breathless; he used me to knock over part of the band——"

"Was that you who sent that bandstand flying?"

"I and my partner. And, when at last patience and strength were exhausted, and I begged for a little rest, he looked down at me with the kindest condescension, and said encouragingly: 'Oh, you will soon get into my step!'"

They both went off into a peal of laughter.

"He came from Leicester," she said.

"I should like to punch his head."

"Please don't. I dare say somebody there will like to see him again. Besides, there are so many other things I want you to do for me first."

"What are they?"

He was sitting, leaning forward, his arms on his knees, and gently opening and shutting her fan. He looked round at her as he spoke, his eyes very steady and earnest.

"Oh, heaps! Have you been trying to find any work for me in London?"

"There's plenty up there," he said, his eyes looking away for a moment, and growing very dark. Then, with a quickened note in his voice, he sat straight upright. "Oh, Daisy, there's such lots for me and you to do, if we only knew how to begin. Such sin, and suffering, and hopelessness! I didn't know what to do first," perfectly unconscious of the Good Samaritan part he had played to the wretched man he had found fainting on the highway of life. "All our strength, all our money would be less than a drop in that ocean of sin and pain."

"Yet every drop of rain helps to make a green blade grow," she said gently, with shining eyes.

They talked on together as they talked to no one else but themselves. The next dance began; but they did not notice, and Anthony was not engaged, and Daisy had completely forgotten her partner. It was the "square," that she had given to Aston.

She and Anthony were sitting down in the large hall, near the door. Aston came to the top of the stairs and watched them for a few moments. From the distance he could see how earnest and animated her face was; how absorbed they were in each other's society. He turned sharply away. He saw she had forgotten. His heart was full of rage and bitterness against the man who could make her so forget. He would not go down and claim her; he felt he could hardly trust himself.

When Daisy at last remembered her partner, the dance was over. She was full of remorse.

"He ought to have come and looked for you," said Anthony, with the slightest touch of irritation, as if he thought she was troubling herself too much.

"Oh, but I quite forgot!" she exclaimed, penitently, "and he only asked me for one, and I gave you four!"

Anthony made no farther comment; but took her back to the ball-room.